

## **EDUCATION WORK GROUP**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**January 17, 2013**

Conference Room 2, Patrick Henry Building  
1111 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia

The Education Workgroup meeting convened at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 17, 2013 in the Patrick Henry Building, Conference Room 2, located at 1111 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia.

#### **Members Present:**

- **The Honorable Laura Fornash**, Secretary of Education (Chair)
- **Peter Blake**, Executive Director- State Council on Higher Education
- **Regina Blackwell Brown**, Educational Specialist for School Counseling - Henrico County Public Schools
- **Dr. Scott Brabrand**, Superintendent- Lynchburg City Schools
- **Lee Brannon**, Superintendent- Wythe County
- **Joel Branscom**, Commonwealth's Attorney, Botetourt County
- **Michael Cline**, State Coordinator of Emergency Management
- **Steve Cover**, Chief- Virginia Beach Fire Department
- **Dr. Rachel Foglesong**, Principal- A.M. Davis Elementary School (Chesterfield Co.)
- **Sarah Gross**, Legislative Liaison – Virginia PTA
- **Meg Gruber**, President – Virginia Education Association
- **Brian Hieatt**, Sheriff- Tazewell County
- **Allen Hill**, Father of Rachel Hill, victim of Virginia Tech shootings
- **Dr. Charles J. Klink**, Asst. Vice Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs, VCU
- **Judi M. Lynch, Ph.D.**, Principal- Saint Gertrude High School, (City of Richmond)
- **Dr. Keith Perrigan**, Principal- Patrick Henry High School (Washington Co.)
- **Alexa Rennie**, Student- James River High School
- **Dianne Smith**, School Board Member – Chesterfield County
- **Steve Staples**, Executive Director- Virginia Association of School Superintendents
- **Leonard Stewart, Jr.**, School Board Member, City of Lexington
- **Josie Webster**, Virginia Council for Private Education
- **Patricia Wright, Ed.D.**, Superintendent of Public Instruction

#### **Members Absent:**

- **The Honorable Tom Garrett**, Senate of Virginia
- **Jeff Ellick**, Principal, James River High School (Chesterfield Co.)

#### **Staff Present:**

- **Joann Burkholder**, Student Assistance Systems Coordinator, DOE
- **Dr. Cynthia Cave**, Director, Office of Student Services, DOE
- **Mary Savage**, Emergency Preparedness & Safety Manager, VCCS
- **Diane Vermaaten**, High Ed Council Sr. Coordinator, SCHEV
- **Larry Wilder**, Special Assistant, Office of the Secretary of Education

### **Legal Counsel Present**

- Kay Heidbreder , Office of the Attorney General
- Noelle Shaw-Bell, Office of the Attorney General

### **CALL TO ORDER      Sec. Laura Fornash, Chair**

Sec. Fornash called the meeting to order at approximately 1:05 PM and addressed the Governor's charge to the Task Force, the approach of the Work Group to support the Task Force in these efforts. Sec. Fornash emphasized the focus of the first two meetings being to identify if any recommendations require legislative or budget amendments and, if so, report out by the end of the two initial January meetings.

### **REPORTS**

#### **K-12 Overview / Questions / Suggestions**

Dr. Cynthia Cave of the VADOE presented an overview of the impact of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Federal Funds.

- The federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act funding authorized in 1994 increased the capacity of school divisions and the state to plan for and to address schools safety through supporting human resources, training materials development and delivery, school level prevention programs and services, community partnerships between school divisions and service providers, such as community service boards, and the employment of School Resource Officers.
- The elimination of federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) funding from the 2010 federal budget reduced the resources available for school divisions to address school safety and for the state to provide technical assistance in this area. In 2009, the state allocation was approximately \$5.4 million. School divisions received \$4.03 million, the Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (GOSAP) received \$1.08 million, and about \$304,000 remained at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).
- School divisions used SDFSCA funds to provide drug and violence prevention services to 780,802 Virginia students, representing 63.38 percent of the total enrollment in Virginia's schools in 2007-2008. Of these, 350,778 were elementary students, 182,530 were middle school students, and 247,494 were high school students. Student Assistance programs, in sixty-three school divisions, served 202,275 students in grades Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup>.
- School divisions used SDFSCA funds to sustain collaborative efforts with community stakeholders to address local needs and to leverage other funding resources. School divisions contracted with public and private entities for services. In 2006, approximately \$420,000 went to community service boards, over \$450,000 to other service providers, and over \$200,000 to local law enforcement to support School Resource Officers.
- These federal funds supported technical assistance to school divisions from the state, including training in crisis planning, management, and emergency response, development of model policies and procedures, sharing of best practices, and program monitoring and evaluation.
- There have been no state funds allocated to replace lost SDFSCA funds.

Joann Burkholder, Student Assistance Systems Coordinator of the VADOE presented an overview of Student Assistant Programming.

- Student Assistance Programming (SAP) offers a systematic and flexible approach for integrating and sustaining evidence-based practices, programs and strategies to enhance a positive school climate and safe school environment.
- SAP provides a framework and process for managing the continuum of social, emotional, and mental health supports for all students and intervention for those that need it.
- SAP uses a data-driven decision making process conducted by a planning team in each school to assess needs and monitor interventions.
- SAP engages students and parents at each level of prevention, intervention and support services.
- SAP builds and maintains collaborative partnerships with multiple community stakeholders – e.g., law enforcement agencies, community service boards, other behavioral health service providers, social services, the faith community, youth and family serve organizations, prevention councils.
- SAP changes priorities as determined by relevant data and review of existing plans, curriculum, practices, programs and strategies.

Dr. Cave summarized the results of school divisions' recent reviews of information submitted to the Virginia Center for School Safety (VCSS) for the school safety audit. .

- In early January, Secretaries Fornash and Decker requested that school divisions review the information submitted to the VCSS for the annual School Safety Audit. Virginia school superintendents responded to a survey identifying the results of their reviews of the 2010-2011 school year information.
- The area of greatest perceived strength identified was "formal emergency notification in place for parents/guardians" with 98.0 percent (145) respondents indicating "adequate" and 2.0 percent (3) respondents indicating "needs improvement."
- The area of greatest perceived weakness is "assignment of school resource officers", with 49.3 percent (72) indicating "adequate" and 50.7 percent (74) indicating "needs improvement."
- The areas with the next-lowest ratings as "adequate" include the following:

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<u>Area</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Needs improvement</u>
Building security with a controlled access is in place	<b>63.9% (94)</b>	36.1% (53)
Safety concerns gathered from parents/guardians	<b>77.6% (114)</b>	22.4% (33)
Safety concerns gathered from community stakeholders	<b>82.3% (121)</b>	17.7% (26)

- Responses to open-ended questions indicate a lack of understanding of discipline, crime and violence data that are reported and available; lack of consistency in the frequency of evacuation drills; need for training in communication and notification systems, including involvement of first responders; need for more input on safety concerns from community stakeholders; and need for funding for school resource officers and increased security systems.

After presentations, the question was asked whether there were plans to rebuild coalitions and whether there was funding available to do so. It was pointed out, in response, that school divisions continuing activities previously funded by Safe and Drug Free dollars do so with local funds or with one-time federal grants. Best practice supports the continued communication with community partners and maintaining community coalitions.

One member addressed the template prepared by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) in collaboration with VDOE for school emergency plans. He suggested that the template might be modified to so as to require use by school districts as well as provide for training. The template might also be modified to include additional components such as one for an active shooter on school grounds.

A member pointed out that there was distinction between school security and school safety and that in the past, there were enough dollars for training and facilitating. Another member asked whether there was data on what schools are doing now regarding Safe and Drug Free Schools. The response was that VDOE has not collected programming data from school divisions on a systematic basis since the loss of the federal funds. Training has continued, in cooperation with other agencies, such as the Department of Criminal Justice Services. A one-time federal grant supported the development of a one-day institute in "Conditions for Learning." Technical support for safe schools continues at VDOE; however, at a diminished level, with the loss of federal resources. VDOE will be releasing a new publication, *Student Assistance Programming: Creating Positive Conditions For Learning* in January 2013.

There was further discussion regarding:

- The distinction between SROs and SSOs;
- The varying scope of duties and funding of SRO's as set forth in the local MOUs;
- The use of blended positions and the use of a model template as devised by the Virginia School Counselors association.

#### **K-12 Questions / Suggestions posed by the Workgroup:**

1. Should a benchmark ratio for number to students to SRO or SSO be established in schools?
2. Are there ideal requirements of SROs to be identified and standardized e.g. "likes" kids, understands school environment, has training in dealing with kids with emotional problems or special education situations where a reaction is caused by a disability and not purposeful defiance of a SRO.
3. Can/should the training and the roles of SROs / SSOs be standardized as it is for the campus security officers?
4. What steps can be taken to ensure that SROs that are assigned to schools actually want to do the job? The relationship can be difficult if SRO doesn't want to be at the school.
5. Can an application for hand-held devices be developed which would provide teachers with easy access to the appropriate steps to take in the event of a threatening event/emergency?
6. How does the teacher get a hold of administration or SSO/SRO in an emergency? Should some sort of protocol or alarm system be established that permits teachers to reach the SROs/SSOs in an emergency?
7. Should SROs and SSOs receive same preparation training?
8. Is there refresher training for SROs? If not, should there be?
9. Might there be "volunteer school security and response teams" who would be trained to respond and provide security for schools?
10. Modifying the school emergency plan template developed by VDEM to require sue and provide for training; include additional components such as one for active shooter.

## Higher Education Overview / Questions / Suggestions

Mary Savage, Emergency Preparedness & Safety Manager, VCCS, presented on the *Report of the Virginia State Crime Commission on Campus Safety* -January 2006 and *Virginia's Community College's Focus on Emergency Preparation and Management* - Report of the Chancellor's Emergency Preparedness Review task Force -January 2008.

- Institutions of higher education are governed by code, legislation, and executive orders.
- Prior to the best practices recommendations that came out of the Crime Commission Study on Campus Safety (2006) – HJR 122, campus security officers had no formal training. A standard training curriculum has been established for campus security officers.
- Where there is both a campus police department and a campus security department, campus police are elevated to a first responder role. Where there is no campus police department, campus security department is left to fend for themselves. The level of sharing and dissemination of information with local forces often depends on the existence of a campus police department. While there is funding provided by DCJS for law enforcement agencies, there is no funding available or provided for Security Departments.
- Federal funds from FEMA that were allocated and were distributed by VDEM to these departments to improve emergency preparedness have been eliminated. These funds were most often used for training and equipment such as emergency call boxes. Unfortunately, campus safety and security often suffers first when cuts are made.
- The 23 colleges in the VCCS are audited for safety annually. The same cannot be said for the 4-year institutions.
- A lot of legislation already exists but the institutions are often not required to implement the recommendations nor is the funding needed to implement the recommendations provided.
- A lot of schools already have great plans/programs that have been shelved due to lack of funding. The work the institutions would like to do for safety and security is often cost prohibitive. Can those initiatives be identified, quantified, and funded rather than reinventing the wheel? Institutions have tried to implement the 27 best practices recommendations of HJR 122 to the best of their abilities but without a mandate and funding support implementation is inconsistent.
- There is some question around how often active shooter training provided to campuses. Is there a mechanism or can a mechanism be established where active shooter training is provided on a regular basis? If you hire someone to do a job you need to give them the tools to execute the job.
- In terms of best practices, Virginia Tech has a faculty police academy and a student police academy to train faculty and students on how to respond in an emergency situation. That type of training is not available at the 23 VCCS colleges and may or may not exist at other 4-year institutions.
- Every public higher education institution in the Commonwealth does have an emergency notification system in place. The type of notification system varies from campus to campus. Some have electronic monitors that ensure hearing impaired students are aware of a threat on campus. Should these systems be reviewed and a minimum standard be established?
- The Campus Emergency Response Team (CERT) training that is available to campus security officers through DCJS could be updated and modified to be applicable to K-12. The efficacy of the CERT program training can be seen at Danville Community College where there is a very

active CERT team. The entire team is based on volunteering of faculty and students. CERT does have a law enforcement component; however, it can be modified to add an active shooter component. CERT training in K-12 could provide teachers with the knowledge to know what you they should and should not be taking as well as what to be aware of and what to watch for.

- The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) has just funded a new Campus Safety Coordinator position to provide statewide leadership to Virginia's colleges and universities in addressing domestic and sexual violence. This position could potentially be a resource for providing leadership for addressing all safety threats on public higher education campuses.

Kirsten Nelson, SCHEV, presented on *Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Board Report and Implementation Strategies – Enhancing Campus Safety* (December 2012). She specifically addressed the recommendation to establish a Campus Safety Coordinator position at the Department of Criminal Justice Services to provide statewide leadership to Virginia's colleges and universities in addressing domestic and sexual violence. Prior to presentation, Ms. Nelson learned from Donna Michaelis (Manager, School and Campus Safety at the Virginia Center for School Safety, Department of Criminal Justice Services) that interviews for the position are underway and the position is being filled.

Larry Wilder, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Education, addressed the recommendations, contained in the Virginia College Mental Health Study or Bonnie study, which had a legislative component. In short, all of the recommendations, save one, were passed in some form during the 2012 General Assembly. The only recommendation not passed (concerning the requirement of community colleges to develop mental health policies) has been introduced this year by Sen. Barker (SB1078). Larry Wilder will provide the workgroup with a list of pending legislation (including SB 1078) to ensure that the workgroup does not duplicate or contravene existing legislative efforts to implement the recommendations.

On a national level, the recent executive orders from the President include: 1) a provision of grants to encourage schools to hire SROs; and 2) a provision funding to enable the hiring of 1,000 school resource officers. While it is impossible to say when, how, or if the Commonwealth will have access to these funds it is important to be cognizant of what is taking place at the national level.

## **Public Comment**

Angela Ciolfi – Legal Director, JustChildren (A program of the Legal Aid Justice Center)

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (also known as PBIS; formerly called Effective Schoolwide Discipline) have been determined to be an effective way to prevent violence in schools. The program improves school climate, reduces disruptive and other challenging behavior, and decreases reliance on out-of-school suspension. Despite quantitative evidence of its efficacy, only 12% of the Commonwealth's schools have implemented the program.
- There is a need for a conversation about standards and best practices for SROs.
- The workgroup should be mindful moving forward to ensure effectiveness based on environment of the school.

At 3:25PM, Sec. Fornash adjourned the meeting.